

APRIL 1965

The Ceunant Mountaineering Club



EDITORIAL

As a rule, nothing much happens at Ceunant Annual General Meetings, so this year we went out of our way to provoke a bit of discussion. We certainly succeeded. The drop in hut fees, meet attendances and membership, and the rise in expenditure and general dissatisfaction started many tongues wagging, so much so that we nearly went past closing time.

The old bone of contention "the missing club spirit" came under the microscope again. What is this mystical thing, "the club spirit"? It is the mixture of personalities of people gathered together for a common purpose. Is it the same as it used to be? Of course not, because for one thing there are not the same people. Another reason is that, in the early days, when there were fewer members (all of them active), there was a pioneering spirit abroad, and everyone went around together. Nowadays, most of those people have dropped out, and the club has become fragmented. "Meets" are meets in name only, small groups go off on their own, and are not seen again until beer time. There are still members, who are among the most active, who rarely come on an official meet, and when they do, never join in any communal activities. There is nothing much one can do about this; everyone has the right to do as they like; but it does mean that the "spirit" had changed. Incidentally, it is not much use harking back to the halcyon days of Pen Ceunant, either. The heyday of the club was 3 or 4 years ago, when Pen Ceunant was already a back number.

One member put his finger firmly on a much more serious aspect of this business, and that is the noticeable lack of keenness by the 'active' members who do turn up on meets. On any meet nowadays, you will find people hanging round the hut or camp site until past midday, discussing what they are going to do until it is nearly too late to do anything; Also, mountaineering is only one of the activities of the club today - taking its chance against the rival counter attractions of swimming,

PAGE THREE

boating, motoring and so on. In "the old days", if there was any chance of a fine day, we couldn't wait to get on the crags. Black rock sands are a more likely venue now.

In lighter vein, it is doubtful whether the well-meant suggestion that we held a Sunday service would help much. This is not what is missing. Certainly in the old days we used to sing hymn tunes, though the words would not have been recognised by any non-mountaineering cleric.

There can be no easy solution to these ills. All we can do is make sure that the club is organised to the best of our ability to suit the needs of the members of the day.

We must try to recruit new members, and make them feel at home when they come.

And finally we must all, old and new members alike, try to regenerate some of the keenness and interest that seems to have waned in the last 3 years.

Talking of hymn tunes, what has happened to the mountaineering sing-songs we used to have in the "old days"? A few years ago your humble servant, the Editor, started a move to revive the habit, with ideas of issuing a "song sheet". This received some support from members at the time, but the committee of the day were not enthusiastic because of the danger of some of the lyrics getting rewritten in newer and spicier idiom, and singeing the eardrums of the chaste. I suppose this would happen, but my song sheet would have been a model of virtue, and in any case nobody expects a mountaineering club meet to be like a vicarage tea party. At least nobody who ever went on a joint meet with "The Stoats" would.

This may sound a bit boy scoutish, but I think a round of songs helps with the "club spirit" which everyone laments the lack of so much.

Anybody interested?

The opinions in this newsletter are those of the Editor, and are not necessarily endorsed by the Committee.

Publications Editor:

I.D. Corbett
420, Shirley Road,
Acocks Green,
Birmingham, 27.

CLUB NEWS

The situation regarding the Cambridge is still much in the air. The latest news is that it might be demolished within 6 months or 3 years! Meanwhile, alternative accommodation seems assured.

Peter Hay has left the district, after taking a job in the North of England. We hope he will continue to frequent the club meets - without him the statistics would look even worse than they do. He attended every meet last year.

Peter has resigned from the Committee, and Roger Lavill has been co-opted in his place.

CLUB LIBRARY

The library continues to flourish under the care of John Daffern.

The following additions have been made since the last list was published:

Mountain Rescue and Cave Rescue	Mountain Rescue Committee
Two Star Red	Gwen Moffat
My climbs in the Alps and	
Caucasus	A.F. Mummery
The Kanchenjunga Adventure	F.S. Smythe
The Alps	Wilfrid Noyce
Ascent of Dhanlagiri	M.Eiselin
Mountaineering in Britain	R.W.Clark and E.C.Pyatt

PAGE FIVE

OUTDOOR MEETS

April 30th-May 2nd	LLYN IDWAL	Camping	Leader, B. Martin
May 14th-16th	LANGDALE	Achille Ratti hut or camping	Leader, P. Holden
May 28th-30th	MOELWYNION	Camping near Ffestiniog	Leader, R. Lavill
June 11th-13th	GOWER PENINSULA	Camping	Leader, M. Kerby
June 25th-27th	LLYN DUR ARDDU	Climbing and Walking	Leader, J. Hurst
July 2nd-4th	DOW CRAG	Camping and possibly hut	Leader, A. Mynette

Following the setting up of the Coed Tremadoc National Nature Reserve, climbing on Craig Pant Ifan is now by permit only. Permission for club members has been obtained, and anyone wishing to climb there should see Basil Jones.

INDOOR MEETS

Mary Kahn took over the job of indoor meets secretary at the Annual General Meeting, and there are already welcome signs of action in this field.

The programme of meets has been mapped out up to March next year, and the system of circularising members about lecture meetings is at last in operation.

The first talk, Swiss slides by Mark Keller, attracted a capacity crowd at the Cambridge, and we hope this points to a revival of our indoor meets activity, which has sadly dropped off in recent years.

The programme for the next year is:

May 19th	Illustrated lecture by Tony Smythe on "Alaska". Midland Institute 7.30. Tickets 2/6d.
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PAGE SIX

June 2nd	Film evening, including "Hazard" with Joe Brown climbing.
June 30th	Evening Meet to Brassington
July 28th	Treasure Hunt
September 15th	Ian Cartledge Lecture (provisional date)
October 16th	Members slides
November 3rd	Lecture by Robin Quinn
December 3rd	Lecture by Dave Jacobs
<u>1966</u>	
January 26th	Harold Ellison on Mountain Photography
March 2nd	Lecture by Trevor Jones

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The ninth Annual General Meeting of the Ceunant Mountaineering Club was held at the Cambridge Public House on Wednesday 17th February, 1965. Thirty-seven members were present, together with about a dozen prospective members and guests.

Chairman's Remarks

Mike Kerby said that at last year's A.G.M. he had expressed the hope that Club progress would continue in 1964 as it had in 1963. Unfortunately, he was unable to report that this was so.

For one thing, our finances had suffered a setback, but more serious than this was the fact that we were not attracting many new members. It was well known that many people enquire about joining the Club, come to the Cambridge a few times, and then are never seen again. Were we making these people welcome enough? What do we offer besides a Club hut?

The Chairman said that coupled with this problem, was that of attendances at outdoor meets. The same few faces were seen over and over again. New faces were rare, and older members don't seem to both^e any more. Why was this? Could anything be done about it?

Several other points had cropped up during the year.

PAGE SEVEN

He quoted a comment made by a member a few months previously. "Tyn Lon is a pigsty". Because of this stigma, some members don't stay there any more, or at least camp in preference. "It is," said the Chairman, "a very expensive pigsty".

The annual dance was once again a loss financially. We had been badly let down by the management of the Bournbrook Hotel, who had cancelled our long-standing booking literally at the last minute, and put us into another room, which was far too small for the 74 who turned up, and altogether unsatisfactory. In answer to a member's question, the Chairman said that he had sent a strong letter of complaint to Ansell's Brewery, but had received very little satisfaction.

He quoted another remark, this time about indoor meets. "We never know what is happening". He promised at the last A.G.M. to advertise these meets more, and things were beginning to move in this direction now.

The Chairman said there was an air of disinterest in the Club and its affairs, and he thought that members should be more critical of the Committee's efforts. We were in danger of foundering on a bed of apathy, disinterest and stagnation. He commented that, up to the previous Wednesday, no proposals had been received for the new Committee. Once again members seemed content to let the old Committee re-elect itself.

The Chairman turned to particular aspects of Ceunant activities during the year:

Tyn Lon: The drying room was now completed (prolonged cheers), and all that was required was for some bold person to switch on and see what happened.

Indoor Meets: It is now definite that we shall have to be out of the Cambridge by June this year. We were now looking for suitable premises to hold our meetings, and any suggestions would be welcome.

Newsletter and Library: The Newsletter had had another successful year, and the Library was now housed in a large cupboard which allowed easier access.

PAGE EIGHT

Journal: The position was the same as last year, namely that the Journal was about to go into print! There was no cause for complaint, as the delay was due entirely to our searching for cheaper ways of producing it. Very many thanks were due to Rosemary Daniell, who had undertaken the enormous job of fair-copying the drafts. Many hours of work had gone into this.

B.M.C. The Chairman had managed to attend four out of six B.M.C. Committee meetings. The highlight of the B.M.C. year was the completion of the Glenbrittle Memorial Hut, which will be officially opened in June. B.M.C. had made a small loss during the year, but it was hoped that this would be covered by an increase of the Government grant from £450 to £750.

The number of member clubs increased by 12 during the year, to 129. Schools increased from 62 to 66, and youth centres etc., from 18 to 32. This was a healthy sign that information was being introduced into the right places.

Committee: The Chairman thanked the Committee for their work during the year, and offered a special word of thanks to Tony Daffern, who was retiring from the Committee after many years of service in various offices.

The Chairman announced that he, too, would be retiring from office, and Tony Daffern proposed a vote of thanks to Mike for his three years service as Chairman, during which he had put much hard work into organising Club affairs, making Club speeches, and attending B.M.C. Committee Meetings. This was loudly acclaimed by the meeting.

Secretary's Report

Basil Jones said that since the last A.G.M. there had been nine committee meetings at the Cambridge, and one at PantIfan. Thirteen postal enquiries had been received from people interested in joining the Club. Three of these subsequently came to the Cambridge, and one has become a prospective member.

Altogether ten people have become prospective members, and five full members.

The Club had lost twelve members during the period, due to resignations, following removal from the Midlands, or being removed from the list because of non-payment of subscriptions. Two members had emigrated, with more apparently to follow, and there had been three marriages, although we did not consider these latter "lost" even if their appearances became more infrequent.

Treasurer's Report

Tony Mynette said that the Club had not had such a successful year in 1964. On the General fund, subscriptions were down, and expenses up. On the Hut fund, hut fees were down by £36, most of this being on members fees which had dropped from £50 to £30. (This is further commented on in the Hut Warden's report). Expenses were again up, the result being a drastic drop in the Hut fund surplus from £87 in 1963 to £34 in 1964.

In discussion, the hoary old question of "Whether the dance loss was justified" was dredged up again, with all its implications and side issues of how much social activity there should be in a climbing club etc. All that emerged from this were the three thoughts:

- (a) One dance per year could hardly be described as a superabundance of social activity.
- (b) It was taking too narrow a view to look at the dance question from the financial angle only.
- (c) We should be capable of organising one ^{dance} ~~day~~ per annum and making it a success.

One member thought that, irrespective of organised social activity, there was far too much of a social air about the club generally, particularly among the active members. Too many parties and too little climbing.

PAGE TEN

It was pointed out that the Club was going to need a considerable amount of money in the near future for:

- (a) Tyn Lon (ref.Pigsty)
- (b) Journal
- (c) Room Hire when we have to move out of the Cambridge.

Suggestions for raising money included:

- (a) Raffles (a lot of effort for little return)
- (b) Members loans
- (c) Life membership
- (d) Large scale public lectures by well-known people
- (e) Room collections (these used to raise £12 p.a.)
- (f) Jumble Sale.

It is not known how many of the above are possible or desirable, but obviously the Committee will have to consider the problem during the coming year.

Indoor Meets Secretary's Report

Robin Costello said there had been five indoor meets, and two outdoor evening meets. Attendance had been good, particularly since the notification cards had been printed. He thought the cost of these well worth while. The five meets comprised two lectures by members; two members slide evenings; and only one outside speaker, despite many negotiations. The Meets Secretary blamed this on the failure of previous Secretaries to keep any record of lecturers addresses etc. The Chairman pointed out that there was, in the Club Library, a book which contained all this information.

Robin thought that holding lectures to make money was not practicable unless we had our own lecture room. The Chairman stated that this had once been discussed, but was far beyond our means.

Outdoor Meets Secretary's Report

Pete Hay said that twenty-five meets had been programmed. One, the Whit meet to Wasdale had to be

cancelled for lack of support - although there were thirty people at Tyn Lon that week-end! The main changes over previous years were the increased number of visits to the Lake District, which was now much "closer" as a result of the completion of the motorway, and the reduction in the number of day meets. The attendance pattern was changing, and day meets, which used to attract twice as many people as week-end outings, were now very poorly attended. He thought it worth keeping on the programme, but at a lower level.

Ten club huts had been hired for use on our meets, but the number of hut dwellers had gone down, and in three cases the hut was not used at all. This, coupled with the reduction in takings from Tyn Lon, seemed to indicate that we are in the midst of a cyclic period of camping popularity.

Average attendances at meets were eleven members and six visitors and prospective members; slightly higher than last year. Only thirteen members had attended more than five meets, and twenty-eight members have attended no meets at all. During the year thirty-six different guests had been out with the club, and hardly any of them had become prospective members. In answer to a question, Pete said he did not believe that the six months probationary period was responsible for putting people off. He personally thought it well worthwhile.

The Meets Secretary emphasised the importance of members collecting hut fees from their guests. He said that, of the thirty people who stayed at Tyn Lon last Easter, only about half the hut fees had been recovered.

Pete commented on the change in travelling habits. There were no hitchhikers any longer in this affluent age, and if private transport ever looked like falling short of demand, Fred was usually available to fill the breach.

It had been said in previous years that there are not enough walking meets in the programme, so this year more were put in. They were very well attended - by climbers!

PAGE TWELVE

As far as pegging went, there were still about half a dozen people who "dabbled". It was hoped that more members would have a go in the coming year.

Pete emphasised once again the important contribution that can be made to a meet by the leader. Some made a genuine effort, others merely collected names. The main thing they should do was to encourage more people - particularly new members, to come out regularly.

The report was followed by a lengthy discussion centering around the vexed question of "Club spirit", and the alleged lack thereof at the present time. It ranged from suggestions on how to reactivate the non-active, to a quite serious suggestion that we held a service in Tyn Lon on Sunday morning and sang hymns! Points made included: (a) There was a better community of spirit at Pen Ceunant, where, although the climbing standard was not so high, people pottered around together and enjoyed themselves (b) There should be more leadership and responsibility by meet leaders, spurring walkers and climbers to greater efforts. The meet leader should be last out after making sure everyone else was satisfactorily organised, instead of first away, leaving his washing-up for somebody else, as is usually the case. (c) On the meets, people organise themselves; it is the social events which make the club spirit. (d) Irrespective of the number of people attending meets, there is not enough done by those who do go. They get up late, wander aimlessly around, go off to the pub etc. People think you odd if you want to go out mountaineering. (e) There are not enough climbers willing to take novices up climbs. It is up to members to offer to do this, not wait to be asked.

Hut Warden's Report

Bill Yale said that his earlier predictions regarding the falling off in the use of the hut by outside clubs had unfortunately come true. The number of booking enquiries by other clubs was about the same as in previous years, but they kept asking for the wrong week-ends.

PAGE THIRTEEN

These clubs who did book the hut (17 as against 19 last year) seemed to all have small attendances. The number of bookings which had to be refused was 15.

Bill said he was very surprised by the tremendous drop in the use of the hut by our own members. The hut was obviously losing its attraction - perhaps it was all part of the present trend towards camping.

With revenue dropping considerably, expenses had gone up - most of the extra money went on repairs to the roof, which had been 100% successful.

The drying room, as had been said, was now finished. No one had dared to switch on however, for fear of the atomic reactor running wild. The ultimate plan was for the club to subsidise the use of the meter through a separate slot meter, but we were having difficulty in getting MANWEB to make the necessary alteration. The Hut Warden thanked Ken Reynolds for all the work he had put into the electrical side of the project.

The Caernavon County Council, as a result of our complaint about surface water flooding the Cottage, have cleaned out the drain and raised the kerb in front of the doors.

Regarding future plans; in view of complaints received from members, and the shock result of the annual accounts, the hut sub-committee was trying to draw up an overall plan for improving the comfort and appearance of the hut. This ranges from ordinary redecorating to structural changes involving considerable capital. The plan will eventually be put forward to the Committee, and will be spread over several years. One thing which will take precedence is the acquisition of new bunks to replace the present unstable home-made ones. New mattresses are also needed. The fireplace must be rebuilt, and some way found of encouraging the smoke to go up the chimney. Ways and means are being considered of enlarging the living room, and making it warmer and more comfortable in the winter. Much needed improvements are also planned for the kitchen.

PAGE FOURTEEN

Bill summed up by saying he might be wrong in being disappointed at the falling off in hut usage. Maybe it reflected members greater interest in other venues, or perhaps hut usage goes in cycles and we are now in one of the minima. The greater part of our revenue comes from visiting clubs, however, and by making the hut more attractive, we hope to build this up again.

Bill closed by thanking those who had helped in working parties, and in particular the hut sub-committee.

Members pointed out that the drying room had been switched on during a recent wet weekend. A shilling lasted approximately 9 minutes, and the temperature rose rapidly past the point at which the fan windings should burn out! Various suggestions came from members for reducing the bill, and prevent the thing being accidentally left on. All the points raised had been considered at some time or other by the Committee during the numerous discussions before the project was started. In response to a suggestion that 5kw was too powerful, it was pointed out that the calculations had been checked by several authorities.

Election of Committee 1965/66

Chairman	Arthur Becker
Vice-Chairman	Mike Kerby
Secretary	Basil Jones
Treasurer	Tony Mynette
Indoor Meets	
Secretary	Mary Kahn
Outdoor Meets	
Secretary	Pete Holden
Hut Warden	Bill Yale
Publications Editor	Ivor Corbett
Members	Fred Price
	Pete Hay
Auditors	Chris Wilkinson
	Ron Bearman

ANNUAL DINNER MEET by Basil Jones

The Annual Dinner was held on March 6th at the Princes Arms Hotel, Trefriw, and was attended by 54 persons of whom 25 were members, 8 prospective members, 14 members' guests, 2 club guests and 5 club guests' friends. The preceding week brought snow drifts over many roads in Caernarvonshire but none to worry about this side of Pen y Gwryd. Tyn Lon was reached via Ogwyn and Bangor; Beddgelert, Tremadoc and Caernarvon; and Nantlle and Caernarvon, and the last Friday starter to arrive was a Land-Rover which explored the hills west of Bethesda.

Several members who had intended to attend the dinner changed their minds and stayed in Tipton, Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham, Nether Whitacre or Swansea. For twenty minutes or so after the appointed time, while waiters and guests waited for the proceedings to begin, it looked as if the club guests and the club chairman had also had second thoughts. Arthur, however, had merely underestimated the time required to come off Crib Goch in safety (or overestimated the capabilities of a new Triumph Vitesse). John Downes of the Mountain Club arrived before the soup was cold leading a team of five climbers straight from Great Gully, which had proved difficult. They had brought their suits, they said, but had not stopped to change into them, and it would indeed have been a pity if they had, spoiling the effect of their entry. They made a point, later, of letting the club know how much they appreciated the reception they had been given. Mike Rhodes, of the Midland Association of Mountaineers, the principal guest, replied to the toast to the guests and drew on his experiences as an instructor at the Birmingham Athletic Institute to entertain the assembly while they digested their dinners. It is appropriate to record here the club's gratitude to him for undertaking this responsibility and discharging it so agreeably.

While Mike was speaking Jack Howell arrived from Birmingham, late but not unexpected, and was provided with his dinner in solitude by the lounge fire, where the party subsequently found him. Music for dancing, by courtesy of Godwin, Laura and Joan Gabriel, began unheeded, and then suddenly the floor was full of people doing a military twostep. Later on the music became loud and twangy and was danced to no less assiduously, but differently. It was probably 11.30 p.m. when last drinks were

PAGE SIXTEEN

served, and about 45 minutes later when people trooped out into the arctic night to drive to their hotel or round the coast road to Tyn Lon.

On Sunday, parties went walking on Snowdon and the Glyders and snowballing on Moel Eilio. Bill Martin and Jack Howell climbed in the Pass, which, conveniently, became practicable for motors during the late afternoon.

OTHER MEETS

PATTERDALE 30th - 31st January

Attended by 12 members and 5 guests.

Weather was excellent on both days. Most Saturday activities centred on Helvellyn, members walking up by various routes. On Sunday, some members looked for somewhere to ski; others took a tour to Windermere and Coniston. The rest went walking again. The would-be skiers had "an idiots day out" in the snow up Deepdale, some with skis, others bottom-tobogganing without. Snow conditions excellent in gullies.

(Leader, F. Castle).

BRECON BEACONS February 13th - 14th

Attended by 5 members and 4 guests.

On Saturday the entire party battled their way over the main tops of Pen-y-fan in a fierce gale, and followed the horseshoe around the Newedd reservoirs.

The whole party again joined up on Sunday for a walk around the ridge behind the camp site.

"A very communal meet, with climbers, walkers, and even mountaineers, mixing!"

(Leader, J. Brennan).

PAGE SEVENTEEN

MILLSTONE EDGE February 28th

Attended by 6 members and 8 guests.

The weather was sunny early on, with snow showers developing later. A number of pegging routes were done, a few by members with no previous experience, and there was the usual epic of one party finishing their route in the dark. Others enjoyed themselves doing a long walk around the area.

(Leader, P. Holden)

SUNDAY OUT by Pete Holden

I was leaning on Robin's doorbell at 6.45 a.m., and still doing so at 7.10 a.m. Being a light sleeper he rose after this short period and invited me in from the cold doorstep. Twenty minutes later we were kitted up, and left rather hopefully on my old m'bike, which was showing displeasure by spitting dirty oil at us.

Soon we encountered rain and suffered great dampness, and consequent cold and stiffness, in fact Robin had to dismount at Sudbury and run round to regain his circulation whilst relieved from the pack on his back. By the time Ashbourne was reached, prospects for a good day were small and the bike had added to the spurts of oil a rather worrying spasmodic scream and escaping air. It lost all power on inclines; and thus, all things against us, we headed for Dovedale.

After spending ten minutes learning to walk again, we picked up the gear and trogged off in the direction of the "Twelve Apostles". By now it was not actually raining and was not really too cold, so we decided to climb and chose a route we had looked at a few weeks previously. This was called "Knight route" and consisted of a steep totty wall - small overhang - steep slab - small roof and another steep slab (first pitch), then a steep open wall for the second pitch - all artificial climbing apart from the first fifteen feet of tot.

Robin weighed himself down with the necessary "ironmongery", and set to work on the first pitch, which contained most of the hard work and problems. The tot was disconcerting, but overcome with care. The small overhang was warm work and interesting, and the steep slab was short respite before the roof, which was very strenuous, especially the exit, where it was difficult to find places for the pitons in the loose rock. By this time Robin was quite tired and looking forward to reaching the belay. Emerging from the roof, the pitons he had in were quite bad, requiring a certain amount of cunning in use, and he was rather pleased to hear one sing home in the slab above. Now he was almost in reach of the belay and a rest of kinds (in etriers).

He had disappeared from my view when suddenly he appeared again at high speed and came to a swinging halt under the roof. Not quite the game, I thought, but I held the ropes to prevent any likelihood of him arriving full tilt upon my head. Fortunately he was in good shape - (narrow at the waist), and only required to be lowered down, to be relieved of the strain. Needless to say, this was a little disappointing for him to have spent two strenuous hours going up only to have one minute of effortless descent. The only thing to do was to have a short rest, a bite to eat, and start all over again.

Not wishing to waste any time, Robin hurried on the first few feet of tot and joked that it was just the place to fall off - ha! ha! - I saw the rock crumble and Robin's feet and hands scrabbling away for a split second before he launched into space, suspended by the rope coming down from the roof, his feet swooping across in my direction. I dived to the ground and lay incapable with laughter at the spectacle of him, looking rather like Peter Pan, swaying gently to and fro, ten feet above the ground, looking very concerned in case I might let go the ropes whilst writhing on the ground. Eventually I got a grip on myself enough to lower him down again to terra firma, to have another rest until I was in a fit state to watch the ropes. This time, it was a very

careful Robin who climbed respectfully up to the first peg and completed the rest of the pitch calmly, though feeling somewhat "done" on arriving at the belay.

Now it was my turn to climb, a state of affairs which I found myself unsuitable for after having stood more or less still for three hours. Thus I was soon breathless, and giving calls for tight rope, whilst my legs still felt weak and crumbly - rebelling at this inhuman mode of progress. But the human form inevitably adapts itself, and by the time I was under the roof, I was able to conduct affairs with more control and method. On emerging from the roof, I came across the loose pegs, and felt rather glad that I was not leading, the worst peg being removed by a slight pull outwards.

At the belay we sorted out equipment, and it was my turn to bash the beastly pitons into the crack which they were never made to fit. I now moved round a corner onto a vertical open wall which was wonderfully exposed and enjoyed this relatively easy pegging to the top of the climb, and tied on. Robin began to move upwards, thankful to ease the stiffness after having stood in the etriers for so long. Before he reached the top it was dusk, which made things a little more difficult, and when he reached me, we had to be careful not to lose anything whilst untying.

The problem now was to get off the pinnacle, with all the equipment, by means of an abseil in the dark. We scrambled down to a tree, and carefully coiled half the rope each, passed it round the tree, and threw the coils down. This completed, we found that we only had short line slings as abseil lengths, which would undoubtedly cause us great pain as we could only just get into them. Robin attempted to descend first walking down vertical totty rock until he reached a ledge at fifteen feet, where he discovered that the ropes were tangled in what must be a vertical jungle of ivy creepers and thorns. Not very happily, he sat down and proceeded to haul in the ropes, bringing up half the jungle, and to sort out the mess. After about ten minutes, I shouted down to ask how he was getting on. He replied "Its like purgatory and hell down here", and quietly re-assumed the task of penance with hope of eventual release by patient

labour. Eventually good succeeded over evil, and I was able to take in the rope, and help Robin to overcome the unclimbable tot between us. After much struggling and pulling Robin appeared out of the blackness again. Once more we coiled the ropes meticulously, now resigned to the fact that it was not really our day, but with a bit of calmness and patience we might get down that night.

This time we threw the ropes to one side down a clean groove. They dropped beautifully, only to try to swing across to the jungle again. My turn to descend first this time, and I attempted a diagonal abseil into the groove, not very successfully, and found myself descending with all the claws of hell tearing at me, but progress was maintained by bringing masses of vines and creepers along, then eventual bliss in the form of a free abseil to the ground. Robin followed with the same sort of unhappy descent, and we both hoped and prayed that we could bring the rope down through the vegetation - this we did with great relief, and completed the process of stowing away the gear, and trogged off back in the dark to the m'bike.

Having enjoyed the day very much, for all its trying moments, we now felt tired and looked forward to a pot of tea in Ashbourne. This was not to be - all the tea houses were closed. Disgruntled, we sat on the pavement and kitted up properly for the journey back. The m'bike was still going much better than expected, and apart from a few complaints of feet scraping the floor on the odd bend, the journey back to the centre of Brum was uneventful.

Here all our troubles began all over again when we were let down with a puncture in High Street. We had to abandon the m'bike behind the Odeon, and trundle up New Street looking like a couple of clowns amongst the Sunday evening crowds. From a distance we noticed our required public transport, and made an ungainly dash for it. We jumped aboard only to find that we could not remove the giant rucksack from Robin's back. We struggled with it whilst we were both overcome with hysterical laughter at our plight, with an irate bus

conductor asking us to leave his bus to allow the queue of passengers to get on. We obligingly stepped on to the pavement, but had no success in removing the burden, and whilst we were struggling, the bus started up and we had to jump aboard again with Robin having to go upstairs, still with the rucksack on his back. I followed him up and collapsed into the seat behind him, doubled up and nearly crying with laughter. The rest of the passengers on the bus were, I think, quite sure that we were a couple of cranks.

Eventually we got home, and Robin collected his car which had been serviced and went home rather perturbed that he had not got his flat key, and that as it was late, he would have difficulty in getting in. This proved to be the case, and he had an epic finish to the day, breaking into the flat and dragging his weary body into bed.

Here endeth the Sunday.

B.M.C. NEWS

Points from Annual Report

In 1964 the mountains and outcrops attracted people in still greater numbers. Problems continued to arise on access in North Wales, and where bad behaviour of climbers imperilled the use of private outcrops.

Efforts to induce the B.B.C. to give radio information about mountain conditions had been unsuccessful.

The Equipment Sub-Committee has had a year of exceptional activity. The B.M.C. were hosts in September to the U.I.A.A. Safety Equipment Commission, and in the course of the meeting, a specification for general purpose karabiners, embodying provisions for proper control of quality and performance was adopted.

Reports on the Hiatt karabiner, the merits of belay loops of No.4 nylon ropes, and faults in pitons, have been published. The leaflet "Your Rope" was finalised, and field trials of two experimental ropes were conducted in conjunction

with a leading manufacturer. Tests have been made on a number of foreign ropes, and it is hoped to report on these soon.

The main activity of the Peak District Sub-Committee was the preparation for publication of the first three volumes of a new series of guide books to "Rock climbs in the Peak".

Work has also begun on guide books to cover the Limestone Crags in the Peak District.

A point arising from the four Inns Walk tragedy was that on the Peak District 1" O.S. map, shooting cabins and other buildings which no longer exist are still represented. An investigation has been made of this, and findings reported to the Ordnance Survey, who have promised to make the necessary corrections to future editions of the map.

The thorny question of camping facilities in the Llanberis Pass is not yet fully resolved, but all the interests concerned have settled down to consideration of the problems involved, with full regard for the needs of climbers. Meanwhile, ^{the} climbing has not been interrupted.

CLIMBING NOTES by Roger Lavill

The opening of a climbers' shop in Birmingham is long overdue; at the time of writing it has just happened, and the result seems very promising. The shop is Frank Davies, Snow Hill Ringway. The first essential in a climbing shop, after a good range of equipment, is someone who can soundly advise the inexperienced beginner, who must choose his equipment from the maze of metal, leather, wood and plastic that surrounds him. Ken McLaughlin, a skier and climber, and member of the Langdale mountain rescue team, with experience of the Ambleside shop we all know, will, I am sure, meet this necessity admirably.

While on the topic of equipment, strides have been made in the provision of a good safety helmet for British climbers. A model is being manufactured in this country, based on a successful German pattern, but superior. At about £2, it should be a sound investment.

The problem of raising the alarm when in difficulty in the mountains and giving a clear signal of ones position to would-be rescuers has baffled mountaineers and rescue teams for a long time. A type of compact flare distress signal is being advertised under the name "Miniflare", and this, if accepted, would save a great deal of time, particularly in "blanket searches" of wide areas of mountain country.

A new guide is being prepared to Lliwedd, which will help to complete the "new look" Welsh guides. The work is being done by Harold and Neville Drasdo. Harold, it will be remembered, produced the "Eastern Craggs" guide for the Fell and Rock Climbing Club, and with his brother put up a number of new routes now included in the Irish Mountaineering Club's "Donegal Guide". I hope this fresh approach to the Guide proves a success. After all, there are some very long routes here in the middle grades, and route finding gives much more interest than on most other cliffs.

A translation of Walter Bonatti's "Le~~x~~ Mie Montagne", retitled "On the Heights" is now available, published by Rupert Hart-Davis. This man still continues to achieve the impossible. On reading the book, I could not help wondering if his sport is the same one which we stumble to follow. It is so full of tragedy and desperation.

We shall soon be missing the esteemed, if erratic, presence of Robin Costello. Robin will be instructing for the M.A. in the Alps from June, and working in Durham on his return. Jack Parker will be working at an outdoor pursuits centre in Yorkshire after Easter. Although he moved to Yorkshire at the end of last summer, he was unable to start in this job immediately, I believe, because of the centre's being badly damaged by fire. We shall also be losing Tony Daffern to Canada, and Pete Hay is moving north. The loss of such active members will be very great indeed.

Several "newish routes" have been done by members of the Club in the past few months. Some of the better ones which do not appear in guide books are "Plexus" and "Gardd" on Dinas Mot, "Subsidiary Grooves" on Cyra Las, "Pendulum" and "The Flakes" at Stoney Middleton and the Girdle of Chee Tor, Chee Dale. These are all very good routes of various standards in the V.S. category. The first five were done by Pete Holden and Robin Costello and the last by Roger Lavill and Bill Cheverst, who would be glad to supply details to anyone in the Club.

Finally, a motel is reported to have been completed at Tyn-y-Maes between Ogwen and Bethesda. It is thought unlikely that this will seriously affect the booking of Tyn Lon.
